

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
New book on Cuban 5 is tool for defense of Cuban Revolution  
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 79/NO. 3 FEBRUARY 2, 2015

## French gov't uses killings to attack free speech

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Three days after French President François Hollande held a giant march in Paris Jan. 11 in the name of defense of freedom of speech, the French government arrested 54 people for exercising that freedom, charging them with “condoning or threatening terrorism.”

President Barack Obama’s boycott of the march indicated differences on foreign policy between Washington and Paris. And statements by French leaders against anti-Semitic murders belie the history of Jew-hatred by that nation’s rulers.

The “unity march,” organized by the French government to honor French imperialism, took place days after three self-proclaimed Islamist gunmen carried out murderous assaults against satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and Jewish shoppers at a kosher grocery market in Paris.

Cherif and Said Kouachi assassinated  
**Continued on page 9**

## Jobs ‘uptick’ but wages stagnate for workers

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Millions of working people in the U.S. make less today than they did 15 years ago. “In real terms the average wage peaked more than 40 years ago,” according to an October Pew Research Center report. “For most U.S. workers, real wages — that is after inflation is taken into account — have been flat or even falling for decades regardless of whether the economy has been adding or subtracting jobs.”

This decline reflects the effects on workers of the long-term crisis in capitalist production and trade that opened in the 1970s. Bosses saw their profit rates begin to decline from what they had grown used to after Washington emerged from World War II as the top imperialist power. The propertied rulers began cutting investment in plants and production and put their capital into speculative investment, which led to balloons that swelled, then burst, followed by more of the

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## ‘Workers need to fight for control of safety on the job’

DC socialist: Bosses at fault for subway death



Militant

After Metro passenger was killed by smoke on subway in Washington, D.C., Glova Scott, right, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council, said workers need to build fighting unions that can guarantee safety. Above, Julius Orekunein signs to put Scott on ballot.

BY JOHN HAYS

WASHINGTON — “No one has to die in accidents like this,” Glova Scott, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Ward 4 here, told workers as she campaigned door to door and talked to transit workers at the Fort Totten Metro rail station Jan. 18. One woman died and more than 80 were injured when an electric event — the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority says it doesn’t know exactly what, and probably won’t for at least six months — caused thick grey smoke to fill a

Metro tunnel Jan. 12, trapping a train just outside the L’Enfant Plaza station for more than an hour.

“Our campaign calls for workers control of the workplace. The workers themselves have to be in charge of all health and safety procedures. We need to build fighting unions to organize this,” Scott said. “We also call for a federally funded public works program to provide jobs. The government should build more urgently needed public transportation and ensure regular maintenance of subways

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## Rail workers discuss fight against bosses’ attack on safety, crew size



As union contracts expire, freight rail workers in U.S. and Canada face bosses’ demands for speedup, cuts in crew size. Above, July 31 protest in Seattle against one-man crew.

BY ANNE CARROLL AND R.V. SMALLWOOD

CHICAGO — More than 140,000 workers are in the middle of contract negotiations with the wealthy owners of freight railroads throughout the U.S. and Canada who are driving to increase profits at the expense of safety.

Already making record profits, railroad bosses want more and are looking for far-reaching changes. They want to link pay to “productivity and performance,” impose more of the cost of health care on rail workers,

and revise work rules they say “impede the productive utilization of employees.”

The largest of the 12 rail unions in

**FIGHT FOR WORKERS  
CONTROL ON THE JOB!**  
— See editorial p. 9

the negotiations are SMART — the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers — representing 44,000

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## Washington relaxes restrictions on some trade, travel to Cuba

BY SETH GALINSKY

The Treasury Department announced the relaxing of some travel and trade restrictions with Cuba Jan. 15. The moves follow last month’s agreement announced by President Barack Obama in Washington and Cuban President Raúl Castro in Havana to begin negotiations to establish full diplomatic relations. As part of the accord, Washington released the remaining three of the Cuban Five revolutionaries who had been imprisoned on frame-up charges in the U.S. for 16 years.

The new measures “are a step in the right direction,” said a statement published Jan. 16 in *Granma*, *Juventud Rebelde* and other Cuban dailies.

“But there is still a long road to go to dismantle other aspects of the economic, commercial and financial blockade through the use of the executive powers of the U.S. president and for the U.S. Congress to put an end to

it once and for all,” the statement said.

Prohibitions on most U.S. exports to Cuba remain in place, especially for advanced technology, the statement

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### Inside

UK Independence Party shifts toward center 3

Workers in Ukraine battle bosses’ attacks, effects of war 6

—On the picket line, p. 5—

London bus drivers strike to end wage disparity

Vancouver port truckers fight to defend strike gains

Airport workers across US rally to demand higher pay



# Houston grand jury lets another killer cop walk

BY MIKE FITZSIMMONS

HOUSTON — Some 100 people demonstrated in front of the Harris County courthouse Dec. 29, protesting the decision of a grand jury not to indict Houston cop Juventino Castro for killing Jordan Baker in January 2014. “Please stay with me,” Janet Baker, Jordan’s mother, told the crowd, pledging to continue the fight to hold the cop accountable. “It’s going to be an uphill battle.”

Jordan Baker, a 26-year-old African-American, was shot in a strip mall near his home by Castro, who was working a second job as a security guard. Police claim Castro saw

Baker in the parking lot and decided to stop him. A fight ensued and after starting to run away, the cops say Baker turned around, reached into his waistband and charged at Castro. Baker did not have a weapon.

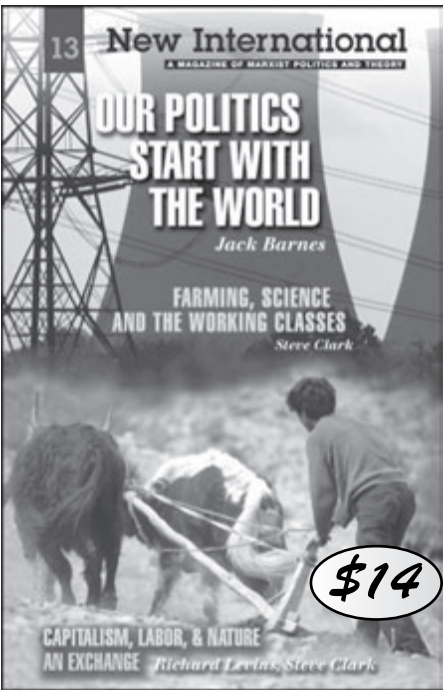
The killing and grand jury decision have attracted widespread interest here in the wake of protests across the country following police killings of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, and Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York. Janet Baker spent days at the courthouse waiting for a verdict, accompanied by relatives of other victims of local shootings.

In the past decade, Harris County grand juries have cleared more than 300 Houston-area cops involved in shootings; every single one since 2004 has been let off.

“It’s hard to say we don’t have a problem with numbers like that,” Carmen Roe, president of the Harris County Criminal Lawyers Association, told the *Houston Chronicle* Jan. 5.

“It could be any one of us. Police shouldn’t be killing people,” Felita Vaughn, a participant in the protest on the courthouse steps, told the *Militant*.

“Last the summer I was walking down the street and cops stopped me for no reason and asked me what I was doing. I said, ‘going to pay rent,’” Demarcus Anthony, 19, said, adding he had never come to a protest before. “They looked at my record and saw a warrant because I had a ticket at school for attendance in the 9th grade. I spent a day in jail.”



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Militant/Deborah Liatos

Rally on steps of Harris County courthouse Dec. 29 protests decision of grand jury not to file charges against Houston cop Juventino Castro in killing of 26-year-old Jordan Baker.

## Workers give holiday bribes to SWP Capital Fund

In recent weeks 11 workers contributed holiday “bonuses” and other bribes from bosses totaling \$1,897.15 to the Socialist Workers Party.

Two workers in Chicago sent a total of \$50 received as holiday “gifts” from their employer. “This is supposed to make up for the fact that they pay new hires only \$9 per hour, \$3 less than they paid three years ago,” wrote Alice Kennealy .

Contributions from production, holiday and other so-called bonuses from the bosses — designed to bribe workers to accept concessions, speedup and wage cuts — are referred to as “blood money” by supporters of the communist movement who turn them over to the party’s Capital Fund. These contributions are an important political foundation for the fund, which helps finance the party’s long-range work.

Alice Randall and Juan Hidalgo in Washington, D.C., sent \$102 and \$90 they received from a settlement in a class-action lawsuit against a former employer, “an aerospace factory where the work schedule was 10-hour shifts,” Randall said, “with five and a half hours before the first break.”

Sam Eagle sent \$100 received from the bosses at the machine shop where he works in Toronto. “Every year at Christmas they take us out to lunch — in our work clothes, so we can return to work afterward — at a cheap restaurant and give us each a hundred bucks. Hope you can find a good use for this small contribution.”

Three workers in Philadelphia sent \$30 each received from rail car maker Hyundai Rotem in December. “Hyundai’s ‘holiday spirit’ went flat for us and 30 co-workers when we were laid off out of seniority two weeks before a hard-won union contract expires,” wrote Gary Creston.

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— MAGGIE TROWE

# THE MILITANT

## Support the Cuban Revolution!

*In December ‘Militant’ correspondents interviewed some of the hundreds of Cuban medical volunteers in Haiti. The ‘Militant’ covers the internationalist solidarity that has marked the proletarian socialist revolution in Cuba since 1959, from Haiti to Angola.*

Cuban doctor examines patient in preparation for eye surgery in Haiti.

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# UK Independence Party shifts toward center of bourgeois politics

BY PAUL DAVIES

MANCHESTER, England — Gains in recent elections by the U.K. Independence Party are interpreted by liberals and many on the left here as an example of the growth of ultra-rightist or fascist parties across Europe, which they attribute to a growing reactionary mood among working people. “UKIP will take Britain’s working people back to the dark ages,” said GMB union General Secretary Paul Kenny in May.

*The Times* of London described UKIP voters as typically from “working-class backgrounds” and unlikely to read books “or to be curious about other cultures.”

In fact, UKIP leaders have shifted the party toward the center of bourgeois politics, presenting a populist message and capitalizing on widespread disaffection with the two main capitalist parties, Labour and the Conservatives.

Workers are looking to defend themselves against steadily declining living standards under the blows of bosses seeking to make working people pay for the crisis of their capitalist system.

“The government is pruning the system but we need deep-rooted change,” Shaheen Shah, a teacher from north Manchester, told the *Militant*. “People earn less than when I came here 10 years ago. More are homeless, more children are hungry.”

“No one represents working people,” said John Edwards, a construction worker from Manchester, in a phone interview. “All the parties favor the wealthy.”

UKIP candidate Mark Reckless won

the Nov. 20 parliamentary by-election in the Rochester and Strood constituency, following a victory for Douglas Carswell in Clacton the month before. Both candidates are former Conservative Members of Parliament. They won support from many workers who had previously voted for the Labour Party, a social-democratic capitalist party historically based on the trade unions.

UKIP was formed as a split from the Conservative Party in 1993, centering its appeal on opposition to Britain’s membership in the European Union, claiming it led to a loss of workers’ jobs. The other main capitalist parties seek to defend the British bosses’ interests through participation in the EU.

## Grinding offensive on working class

While the government reports unemployment is falling, the figures reflect the mushrooming of part-time and casual (temporary) jobs, many paying minimum wage. Real wages have declined for seven straight years. At least 600,000 workers labor under “zero hours” contracts, meaning they have no guaranteed hours of work.

Growing stagnation in production and hiring in the eurozone is putting added pressure on U.K. employers and the government, fueling their grinding offensive against the working class.

Under these conditions many workers are looking for something new. Some look to UKIP, which increasingly presents itself as a populist, pro-working-class alternative.

“The radical tradition, which has stood and spoken for the working class,



Jobless rate in U.K. has fallen but many face part-time work, declining wages. Seeking influence and votes, U.K. Independence Party increasingly presents itself as populist pro-working-class alternative. Above, workers at government jobs center in Cambridge, 2012.

has found a new home in UKIP,” Reckless declared after his election victory. UKIP leader Nigel Farage has described the party as a “people’s army” that rails against the “establishment.”

UKIP spokesman Patrick O’Flynn says a “blend of big business and big government ... is not a path to prosperity for most working people.” He calls for getting out of an “undemocratic European superstate,” tapping into workers’ widespread hatred of government bureaucracy, and says he puts the needs of those in Britain first.

UKIP now presents itself as a moderate party with conservative traditions. Many left-wing groups ignore this shift, presenting UKIP as an extreme right-wing party, rather than one of several pro-capitalist parties seeking backing from the propertied rulers.

Reckless made opposition to cuts in government health care a key plank in

his program. Party leader Farage, who formerly advocated privatizing health care, now says he backs access to free health care through the National Health Service.

UKIP leaders echo many Conservative and Labour politicians in calling for a raise in the minimum wage.

## UKIP shifts on immigration

Farage blames low wages on immigration, saying Britain is “the cheap labor economy of the European Union.” Part of UKIP’s call for the U.K. to get out of the EU is based on ending open immigration from the continent.

But in November Farage changed the party’s position that getting out of the EU would open the door to deporting immigrants. He attacked Reckless for campaigning on the old stand.

The U.K. rulers have taken advantage of substantial immigration from eastern Europe in the past decade to press forward their assault on wages. Farage aims to bring UKIP’s position more in line with the majority course of the capitalist class.

“I’ve always thought we should allow people to stay permanently,” Reckless said after Farage’s attack, adding it’s “the right thing to do by them” and “for our party in terms of how we want to look to the country.”

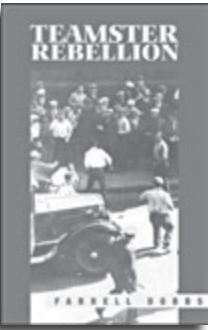
Both Labour and the Tories advocate restrictions on immigrant workers. Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron announced a four-year ban on immigrant workers gaining access to public housing.

The anti-immigrant course of the main capitalist parties is echoed by trade union leaders. In December the GMB union organized a protest at the NEXT warehouse in South Elmsall, following the company’s decision to hire workers from Poland before advertising them in the U.K.

“I like what UKIP says about immigration — if everyone is going to have an equal opportunity to apply for jobs, the government has to reduce the loopholes that allow companies to bring in cheap foreign labor,” Kam Wai Chan, a Malaysian-born factory worker in Manchester, told the *Militant*. “The scale of immigration is straining access to housing, benefits, health and education.”

“There’s no way I’d ever vote for UKIP, Farage is using the immigration issue,” said Anne Lewis, a retired assistant optician. “Look at the Syrian refugees trying to get into Italy. Europe should be helping these people, not sending them back.”

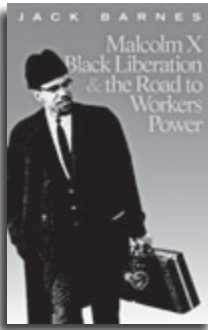
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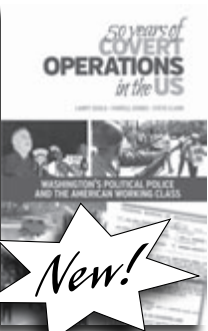
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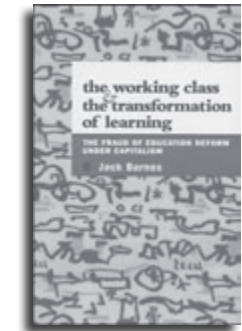
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# Rail workers discuss attacks

**Continued from front page**  
trainmen, engineers and yardmasters; the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees, with some 27,000 track workers; and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen with another 27,000.

The key work rule the bosses want to change is crew size, but they plan to take this on railroad by railroad rather than in industry-wide negotiations. They reduced crews to five in the 1970s and to two in 1991. Now they want to run trains with one person.

“The one-man crew is dangerous,” Dave Larson, an engineer on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway with 10 years experience, told the *Militant* at a Chicago motel where workers stay between runs. Train crews work long hours and often get called in for a trip on little rest. “It takes at least four eyes and four ears to be alert. It’s a dangerous idea that affects the train, its crew and the general public,” Larson said.

With the enormous expansion of oil production in the shale and tar sand regions of the U.S. and Canada, trains full of highly volatile crude are crossing through cities and small towns on a daily basis.

The result? A series of derailments and explosions, the most deadly of which killed 47 people and destroyed most of the town of Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, in 2013. Government officials had granted the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway a special dispensation to run with a one-man crew to save costs.

These developments are generating intense and widespread discussion — and resistance — among rail workers and more broadly. Last September rail workers in the western two-thirds of the U.S. organized protests and meetings from Galesburg, Illinois, to Seattle against demands by Burlington Northern to run trains with a “crew”

of one. They overwhelmingly voted the contract down.

“Last month Canadian Pacific workers from Chicago to North Dakota voted 300 to 13 against a proposed contract,” Mark Burrows, a Canadian Pacific engineer with 40 years’ experience, told the *Militant*. Burrows, who works in the Bensenville terminal near Chicago, is a delegate for SMART and a member of the steering committee of Railroad Workers United, a group active in the fight against the one-person crew.

“CP Rail tried to bribe us by offering to increase pay from \$27.28 to \$42.50 per hour with a minimum 10-hour day if we agreed to work rule changes,” Burrows said. “But the membership rejected it.”

“After BNSF pushed the one-man crew, Canadian Pacific tried to end system-wide seniority and any distinction between yard and road jobs in the 2014 contract,” Burrows said.

“In the yards where train cars are coupled and decoupled, most jobs have only one ground man,” Burrows said. “You have an engineer in the front and one conductor on the back of the train in all kinds of weather conditions. And a standard train is now two miles long.

“With only the conductor and the engineer on the crew, many times only one side gets inspected. What’s going to happen when there is only one person?” he said.

Lamont Pitts and David Steidel, an engineer and conductor who work for CSX, talked with *Militant* reporters at the motel here.

“The one-person crew? It’s definitely an unsafe idea,” Pitts said. “What if the one-man ‘crew’ had a heart attack or got injured?”

“Management says they’ll have maintenance people posted all along the route,” said Steidel, “so that they can respond rapidly to any mechanical needs. But we all know they can’t and won’t do it.”

Over the next few years railroads will be implementing federally-mandated “positive train control” systems that automatically monitor train speed and have the power to slow or stop them. Both Pitts and Steidel said such systems are of limited value.

“The way an engine alert system is set up now,” said Pitts, “if you have a problem the system takes 30 to 60 sec-

## ‘We have to speak out against police brutality’



Militant/Seth Galinsky

NEW YORK — Demonstrations, marches and die-ins protesting police brutality took place across the country Jan. 19 to mark the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. In one of the largest protest actions, some 2,000 people here (above) marched through East Harlem to the United Nations. Many wore shirts saying “I can’t breathe,” words spoken 11 times by Eric Garner as he was killed July 17 in Staten Island when cops threw a chokehold on him, pulled him to the ground and piled on his back.

At the head of the march were Iris Baez, whose son Anthony was killed by a cop who put him in a chokehold Dec. 22, 1994, and Joseph Guzman, who was with Sean Bell when cops shot up their car on Nov. 25, 2006. Guzman survived 11 bullets, but Bell died. The march was sponsored by the Justice League and endorsed by more than 50 community organizations, churches and youth groups.

“Police brutality is not just a Black issue, even though African-Americans are disproportionately affected,” said university student Norrell Edwards, 24. “It’s about power. Silence means complicity so you have to speak out for change.”

Handmade signs, many with quotes from King, and photos of those killed at the hands of the cops in New York and around the country, dotted the march.

Some 200 protesters joined an evening candlelight vigil on Staten Island where Garner was killed, organized by the National Action Network with participation of Garner’s family.

—SETH GALINSKY

onds to go off.” Humans react faster and better.

“In one case I know of the crew was approaching a place on the track where the speed limit was 10 miles per hour,” Steidel said. “The trip optimizer was on but the speed limit for that part of the trip had not been programmed into it. So the train exceeded the speed limit.

“The company blamed the engineer, and gave him six months off. Luckily he had another crew member to stand up for him,” Steidel said. “With a one-person crew you won’t have a chance. It’s going to be the engineer’s fault every time.”

Positive train control technology has its place, Larson told the *Militant*, but

it can’t substitute for human judgment.

“I was at the controls on one trip and saw a car on the tracks. I didn’t put the train into emergency, because that would probably have resulted in broken wheels and a derailment,” Larson said. “It was a 100-car coal train. One car full of coal going through the depot would have killed 100 people — easy.” Larson chose to hit the car.

“Luckily, no one was in it. No one was hurt. We rely on our experience to make a split-second decision like that,” he said. “Could a computer make that decision?”

Laura Anderson and Ilona Gersh contributed to this article.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### San Francisco

**The Economic Crisis of Capitalism, Workers’ Resistance and Building a Revolutionary Leadership Today.** Sat., Jan. 24. Reception, 5 p.m.; program, 6 p.m.; dinner to follow. *Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 345 7th St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.*

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**Midwest Farmers Face Tough Times — Need Alliance with Working People to Resist Effects of Capitalist Crisis.** Speakers: Randy Jasper, Wisconsin grain farmer; Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Chicago. Sat., Jan. 31. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 forum. *2018 S. Ashland Ave. Tel.: (312) 455-0111.*

## —CALENDAR—

### WASHINGTON

#### Seattle

**Guest Gallery Exhibition: “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived.”** Work by Antonio Guerrero for the 16th anniversary of the imprisonment of the Cuban Five. Jan. 14 – Feb. 22.  
**Special Event:** John Martinez, co-chair of the Human and Civil Rights Committee of AFT Local 1789, speaks about the exhibit and the case of the Cuban Five. Wed., Jan. 28, 6:30 p.m. *Both at Columbia City Gallery, 4864 Rainier Ave. S. Tel.: (206) 760-9483.*

## Continued from front page

and buses.”

Carol Glover, the woman who was killed, had to wait more than an hour before being taken to the hospital. Even though Metro bosses had been notified by the city fire department four days earlier that the communications system in the area was not working, it had not been fixed. It took nearly 50 minutes for the Metro to turn off power on the third rail.

At the Fort Totten Metro rail station Scott talked to two Metro workers about the disaster. The workers said management was being very tight-lipped about what had happened and told workers not to discuss it with anyone.

“It is outrageous that management is not getting the facts out for everyone to know the causes right away,” Scott said.

The socialist candidate and her supporters are wrapping up a petition drive

to put her on the ballot for the April 28 special election. They knocked on doors and campaigned in the district Jan. 17 and 18, bringing the total number of signatures to 850. The goal is to collect 1,000, double the requirement.

“When you say socialist what do you mean?” asked Julius Orekunein, a Nigerian-born home nurse aide who has worked in the U.S. for 22 years.

“I work at Walmart. Along with my co-workers, we are fighting to better our wages and working conditions,” Scott said. “That is what the socialist campaign is about — joining and championing resistance to the attacks of the bosses and their politicians, here and around the world.”

“The working class needs to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and use it in the interest of all the toilers,” she said.

“My union tells us not to shop at

Walmart because they pay low wages,” Adrienne Hart, who works at a medical center and is a member of the American Federation of Government Employees, told Scott.

“Our approach is not to tell people not to shop at Walmart,” Scott responded. “We ask them to support the fight for higher wages and to be a part of the fight.”

“Over the last two days, 33 people we talked to got copies of the *Militant* to find out more about the politics of the socialist campaign, and a number took advantage of our special offer on books on working-class history and politics from Pathfinder Press,” Scott told reporters at a wrap-up meeting after the weekend of campaigning.

To help campaign and get the remaining signatures to put Scott on the ballot, contact the campaign headquarters at swp.washingtondc@verizon.net.



# —ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

## Help make this column a voice of workers' resistance!

This column is dedicated to spreading the truth about the labor resistance that is unfolding today. It seeks to give voice to those engaged in battle and help build solidarity. Its success depends on input from readers. If you are involved in a labor struggle or have information on one, please contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

—Maggie Trowe

### London bus drivers strike to end pay disparity

LONDON — Some 20,000 bus drivers, members of the UNITE union, carried out a 24-hour strike here Jan. 13 demanding an end to disparities in pay from the 18 companies that operate bus lines. According to UNITE, there are 80 different pay scales among drivers, with starting pay ranging from £9.30 to £12.34 per hour (\$14.10 to \$18.75).

There were picket lines at 70 depots across the city, affecting all but 40 of the 670 routes, according to BBC News. Each day 6.5 million bus trips are made.

At a picket line at the Tower Transit depot in Westbourne Park, Abdul Hanafi, a union steward, described how Tower Transit bosses have attacked the union in retaliation for raising grievances over contract violations. "They closed the [on-site] union desk and tried to stop me from consulting with my colleagues," he said. "This started out over terms and conditions, but it's now about defending the union."

Strikers were passing around a letter of solidarity to UNITE from the Swedish municipal workers union Kommunal.

"You could say I have the least incentive to strike, since I'm at the top rate," said Graham Herbert at the Bow garage, "but I see this as a platform for all drivers."

The bosses have not yet agreed to contract talks. "This will take patience. It will be a drawn-out fight," said driver Mohammed Sadiq.

—Ögmundur Jónsson

### Vancouver port truckers fight to defend strike gains

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Close to 600 Vancouver port truckers met Jan. 11 in nearby Surrey to organize a fight for the implementation of the agreement they won at the end of a four-week strike last March.

The strike united some 1,500 union and nonunion port truckers who won significant raises for hourly paid truck drivers, and a rate hike and compensation for waiting time for owner-operators who are paid by the load.

tors who are paid by the load.

However, that hard-won victory is under attack. Under newly announced rates bosses will pay owner-operators \$50 for hauling a container less than three miles one way, not \$112 as promised.

"They haven't lived up to the agreement that ended the strike," driver Randy Harpreet told the *Militant*. "The federal and provincial governments, the port and the trucking companies are cheating us."

"Drivers should be paid by the hour, not by the trip," Manny Dhillon, spokesperson for the United Truckers Association, said in a Jan. 13 phone interview. Up to 80 percent of employed drivers are being paid \$40 a trip rather than by the hour.

"Since some trips can take three or four hours," he said, "they may only make \$10 to \$13 an hour," far less than the \$25.13 per hour minimum set in the March agreement.

Truckers also oppose the government plan to cut the number of trucks licensed by the port by 25 to 40 percent, canceling all existing trucking licenses and requiring drivers to reapply.

"Companies get to choose whose licenses are cut," Dhillon said. "It should be by seniority."

"We have to stick together," driver Inderjit Lally said. "We need to be prepared to strike again."

—Steve Penner and Ned Dmytryshyn

### Canada: Locked-out rail workers fight workforce cuts, overtime

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Southern Railway of British Columbia Jan. 5 locked out the 126 members of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 7000 who operate this



Militant/Mike Barker

Port of Vancouver rail workers, members of Canadian Union of Public Employees, locked out by Southern Railway of British Columbia, picket at New Westminster rail yards Jan. 16.

short-haul rail service over 60 miles of track in southern British Columbia. The unionists voted 91 percent against the company's final offer at the end of December. The rail workers organized flying pickets. Other port unions are honoring their picket lines.

Safety is a central issue. Southern Railway has cut the workforce and lengthened the workday with mandatory overtime.

"For the last year they have been forcing people to work seven days a week," conductor Aaron Cruikshank, a picket captain, told the *Militant* Jan. 16. "Track maintenance workers are being told if they don't work 16 hours, they'll contract out their work. It's all about the bottom line, not about safety."

The bosses have reduced the workforce, but not the workload, Local 7000 President Bill Magri told the *Militant* in a phone interview Jan. 12. "In 2010, we had 178 members. In 2015, we have 126. We're doing more work with 52 fewer people."

The company's proposal for a two-tier pay and benefit structure "will weaken the union," mechanic Dan Tower said. "It's the thin edge of the wedge."

Magri said the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and Teamsters have refused to cross the rail workers' picket lines.

That solidarity is having an impact. A ship laden with Asian cars had to travel to Seattle to off-load, forcing the company to pay to truck the vehicles up the coast.

Southern Railway of British Colum-

bia's six office workers, members of the Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union Local 378, joined the locked-out workers on the picket line.

—Katy LeRougetel and Steve Penner

### Airport workers across U.S. rally to demand higher pay

ATLANTA — "I've worked here eight years and all I'm making is \$8 an hour," Kathy Howard, a cleaner at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta airport, told the *Militant* at a Jan. 15 airport protest here. "I put out a petition to get a union."

Some 75 union members, supporters, fast-food workers and several airport workers marched through the terminal chanting and carrying signs reading, "Airport Workers Fight for \$15: Poverty Wages Don't Fly." There were actions at airports in several other cities on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday that day.

"It's very hard not to know if you're going to have money for your daughter," Gian Lopez, 22, a baggage handler at LaGuardia Airport in New York, told Reuters. Lopez said he earns \$9 an hour and depends on food stamps and rental assistance to support his family.

Actions supported by the Service Employees International Union brought out some 200 people at LaGuardia, about 100 in Philadelphia and a few hundred at Newark Liberty International Airport.

—Janice Lynn

## 25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 2, 1990

The attempt by the Soviet government to crush the Azerbaijani struggle against national oppression has sparked massive resistance as hundreds of thousands protest the occupation.

On January 19 an estimated 29,000 Soviet army and interior ministry troops attacked Baku from three directions and shot at "everything that was moving," an eyewitness told reporters. Troops used tanks to push through the barricades that had been erected throughout the city and met widespread resistance.

Mass protests against the military occupation of Baku and the killing of civilians started immediately after the assault. A general strike on January 22 brought Baku to a halt. On that day 1 million people mobilized to mourn the dead and demand an end to the military occupation of the city.



February 1, 1965

The jailing of the 19 officials of the striking welfare unions in New York City under provisions of the notorious Condon-Wadlin Act is coupled with threats of continued prosecution and indefinite jailing until the unionists call off the strike. This is pure and simple strike-breaking by liberal Democratic Mayor Robert F. Wagner.

The penalty provisions of the Act — which outlaws strikes by public employees and fines strikers two days' pay for each day on strike — are clearly unconstitutional. The law has rarely been invoked in the past and never until now to this extent. Yet the mayor, with no dissent from his fellow state Democratic leader, Senator Robert Kennedy, now invokes the law in full, insisting that he must because "the law is the law."



February 3, 1940

On February 6th the Anti-Lynching Bill goes again to the Senate.

Again and again this bill, or one with substantially the same provisions, has passed the House only to be blocked in the Senate by a Southern filibuster. The Southern contingent acts the direct role, calling on their confreres not to "sacrifice the virtue of Southern womanhood and mongrelize the race" (Representative Cox of Georgia in the recent debate). And others speak grandly of the necessity of maintaining "democracy" in these United States and refuse to apply the cloture rule to put a time limit to debate. "Democracy" in these United States consists, not in checking mob savagery with even a grossly inadequate law, but in allowing the representatives of Southern Bourbons to shout lies until their lungs give out.



Militant/Ögmundur Jónsson

London bus drivers, members of UNITE union, organize 24-hour strike Jan. 13.



# Workers in Ukraine battle bosses' attacks, effects of war

BY NAOMI CRAINE

As fighting continues between government forces and Moscow-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine and the country's economy nosedives, the capitalist rulers in Kiev are targeting the working class. Union battles for pay and social programs are spreading.

Ukraine's economy contracted 7.5 percent in 2014. Industrial production was down 17.9 percent in December from a year earlier. Coal production — concentrated in the areas most affected by fighting — is down a staggering 59 percent. The national currency, the hryvnia, has lost nearly half of its value against the dollar, contributing to soaring inflation. Prices of many goods workers need have doubled.

After mass mobilizations toppled the pro-Moscow government of Viktor Yanukovich last February, the Russian government seized Crimea and instigated a separatist war in the Donbass region of southeastern Ukraine. In recent months Russian President Vladimir Putin has distanced himself from the leaders of the self-proclaimed People's Republics in Donetsk and Luhansk, while continuing to provide them with enough weapons and fighters to keep up pres-

sure against the Ukrainian government.

Coal from Donbass had generated 40 percent of electricity used in Ukraine. The separatist thugs shut down some of the mines and are controlling production from the rest, leading to rolling blackouts throughout the country.

Electricity shortages have forced cutbacks in industrial production. At the Evraz iron ore mine in Kryvyi Rih "the second shift is mostly stopped, because there's not enough electricity to keep the ventilation running," Bondar Vitalievych, head of the Independent Trade Union of Miners at the mine, told the *Militant* Jan. 12. Idled workers "are still getting their base pay, but none of the bonuses" that make up a significant part of their regular income.

"The new government's laws cut social payments, including for disabled miners," Vitalievych said. "Both the government and private employers argue that growing expenses for the war mean they have to lower pay and benefits."

## Workers fight for unpaid wages

In December workers who operate the public trams in Kiev carried out a series of job actions demanding as much



Workers on public trams in Kiev carried out two rounds of job actions and organized union in December. Above, transit workers rally Dec. 17 demanding "Give us our back pay."

as six months back pay. The fight was initiated by rank-and-file workers who then decided to unionize, said Yuriy Samoilo, president of the miners union in Kryvyi Rih. His union has sent militants to help the transit workers organize. After a first round of protests in early December, management agreed to negotiate. But with many workers still not paid, and management threatening union leaders, they carried out strike actions Dec. 17-18.

Samoilo said the union in Kryvyi Rih has also sent members to support coal miners fighting for back pay in the western city of Novovolynsk. The miners carried out a one-day strike Dec. 24

and have twice blocked the interstate highway there.

In Kryvyi Rih, unlike many other places, miners "are getting paid on time, because we're very active so the bosses are afraid not to," Vitalievych said.

In response to low wages and a three-month delay in being paid, transit workers in Khmelnytskyi in western Ukraine organized into the Free Trade Union of Railway Workers of Ukraine last summer.

More than 10,000 union members, most of them teachers and other public workers, demonstrated outside the parliament in Kiev Dec. 23, as lawmakers discussed proposals to freeze wages and cut social benefits while raising taxes that will increase the cost of food and other necessities.

When the impact of inflation is taken into account, the 2015 budget projects cutting real spending on education by more than 20 percent, family credits and disability benefits by nearly one-quarter and pension funds by 12 percent. Military spending will more than double, and payments to service Ukraine's debt to wealthy lenders will increase 37 percent. The minimum wage is to be frozen for all of 2015 and wages of public workers will no longer be indexed to inflation.

Parliament adopted the budget Dec. 29. The International Monetary Fund, whose representatives plan further discussions in Ukraine in January, required passage of the budget as a precondition to release the next portion of a \$17 billion "bailout" package.

## War in east takes toll on workers

Despite a Sept. 5 cease-fire agreement between Kiev and Moscow, the military conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk grinds on, with a devastating effect on toilers there. As of Jan. 6, the overall death toll is more than 4,800.

Nearly 400 miners were trapped underground for several hours in the Zasyadko coal mine in Donetsk Jan. 11 when a shell hit the electrical substation that powered the elevators and ventilation system. Two days later 13 passengers were killed when shrapnel from a rocket hit a bus stopped at a Ukrainian military checkpoint at Volnovakha.

Separatist forces have also targeted unionists in the areas they control. Mikhailo Volynets, chairman of the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine, announced Jan. 16 that the body of Ivan Reznichenko, head of the union at the Artemsil salt mine in Donetsk province, had been found in one of the salt pits. Reznichenko had disappeared June 21.

# Washington eases Cuba trade, travel restrictions

Continued from front page

notes, with the exception of telecommunications equipment, which are designed to advance "the objectives of the U.S. policy of trying to increase U.S. influence in Cuban society."

There is growing consensus among the propertied rulers in the United States in favor of loosening restrictions on Cuba. They see new openings to intervene more directly in Cuban social relations given the success of the embargo at inflicting hardships on the island's workers and farmers, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

To meet the challenges created by the embargo, the Cuban government has allowed more room for the workings of the market — including creation of hundreds of thousands of small businesses — while assuring that the bulk of the economy remains nationalized under control of the island's working people.

Conservative columnist George Will supported Obama's moves in the Dec. 24 *National Review*. "Obama's new policy is defensible if it will improve their [11 million Cubans'] political conditions by insinuating into Cuba economic and cultural forces that will be subversive of tyranny," he wrote.

The Cuban government estimates that the more than 50-year-long U.S. em-

bargo — instituted to punish the Cuban people for overthrowing the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista, ending U.S. domination and opening the first socialist revolution in the Americas — has caused more than \$100 billion of losses for Cuba.

While the bulk of the embargo remains in place, the new rules allow the sale of equipment and tools and "micro-financing" to privately owned businesses. The Treasury regulations also make it easier to send money to U.S.-backed "human rights organizations" and other counterrevolutionary groups in Cuba.

The *Washington Post* remains skeptical that the U.S. shift can have the desired effect. A Jan. 18 article by Nick Miroff points to the widespread celebrations around the return of the Cuban Five. He notes continued backing for the 1959 revolution and complains that in Cuba there is a "culture of revolutionary heroism." He says President Castro has "promoted more women, Afro-Cubans and younger figures" and that leadership development is based "on their merits rather than on the strength of personal charisma."

## Opportunities for Cuba

The shift opens opportunities for Cuba's communist leaders to improve economic conditions on the island and opens the door to winning greater support in the fight to eliminate the embargo once and for all.

The biggest change makes it easier for U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba. Those traveling under 12 allowed categories — including educational purposes — no longer have to apply for a U.S. permit. They only need to make sure their schedules don't "include free time or recreation in excess of that consistent with a full-time schedule of attendance at professional meetings or conferenc-

es," according to new rules issued by the Treasury Department. Many of those travelers will take the opportunity to learn firsthand about Cuba's living revolution. Plain tourism remains prohibited.

The rules raise the limit on what U.S. citizens can bring back from Cuba, including rum and cigars, which will generate additional revenue for the island. For the first time, travelers will be allowed to use their credit cards to pay for goods and services in Cuba.

Some 98,000 U.S. citizens — not including Cuban-Americans — visited Cuba in 2012. Travel agencies expect a substantial increase under the new rules.

Cuban-Americans, who already had few restrictions on their travel to Cuba, will now be allowed to send up to \$2,000 to family members on the island every three months, up from \$500.

## U.S. farm giants seek greater access

The U.S. Agriculture Coalition for Cuba, formed a year ago by Cargill, Smithfield Foods, Chicago Foods International and other agribusiness giants, held a press conference Jan. 8 to urge Congress to end the embargo. Among the speakers were both Democratic and Republican senators, congressmen and governors, as well as Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

Although U.S. corporations have been allowed to sell some agricultural products to Cuba they have been hampered by U.S. regulations that require cash payment in advance and ban ships that dock in Cuba from docking at U.S. ports for six months.

U.S. agricultural exports peaked at \$700 million in 2008, but fell to under \$350 million by 2013. Competitors moved in, with Brazil's exports increasing fourfold over the last 10 years. The new rules lift the docking restrictions, but keep the cash payment requirement.

## Free Oscar López!

Puerto Rican independence fighter  
jailed in U.S. for more than 33 years

New York City, Sat. May 30  
March through East Harlem

For more info:  
[www.freeoscarnycmay30.org](http://www.freeoscarnycmay30.org)



# ‘Absolved by Solidarity’ the Cuban 5 are free

## New book is tool for defense of Cuban Revolution

On Dec. 17, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and Antonio Guerrero were freed, joining René González and Fernando González in Cuba — ending 16 years of imprisonment of the Cuban Five on frame-up charges in the U.S.

Below, the *Militant* reprints three sections of *Absolved by Solidarity: 16 Watercolors for 16 Years of Unjust Imprisonment of the Cuban Five*, just published by Pathfinder Press. *Absolved by Solidarity* contains 16 new paintings by Guerrero that focus on the story of the frame-up of the Five and their trial and conviction by the U.S. government. Commenting on his watercolor “The Sentences,” Guerrero says, “Those harsh and unjust sentences had only one purpose: punishing Cuba.”

The book, which also includes a statement by the Five, letters and documents, highlights the firmness, dignity, courage and discipline of the Five that was key to winning their freedom and showing the world what it means to be a revolutionary and to be a communist.

The Five have made themselves available for new assignments in the fight to defend Cuba’s socialist revolution.



### ‘Today we address the American people directly’

On June 20, 2001, as the Cuban Five awaited sentencing in Miami, they for the first time addressed the American people, denouncing the frame-up. Their statement was published in the Cuban daily Granma. In retaliation, U.S. authorities once again stripped them of all personal belongings and returned them to the “hole,”— where they had spent the first 17 months of their imprisonment —for another 48 days. The following are major excerpts.

We are five loyal Cubans who for thirty-three months and five days have endured harsh imprisonment in a country whose authorities are hostile to our nation. We were subjected to a long, scandalous trial marked by transparently political objectives, methods, and procedures, as well as a veritable deluge of malicious and fraudulent propaganda. Today we address the American people directly, to let them know we are the victims of a terrible injustice.

We were accused of endangering the

security of the United States and indicted on numerous charges, including conspiracy to commit murder — charges that could not and cannot be proven since they are unquestionably false. We face prison sentences of dozens of years, possibly even life sentences.

A jury selected in Miami — and that says it all — found us guilty of all charges. We are Cuban patriots and never had the least intention of harming the values or integrity of the American people.

Our small heroic country has survived four decades of aggression, threats to our national security, subversive operations, sabotage, and destabilization. It has every right to defend itself from enemies who use US territory to plan, organize, and finance terrorist actions, and who break your own laws in the process. ...

We have never done anything for money. We have always lived modestly, in line with the sacrifices our own people are making.

We have been motivated by a strong sense of human solidarity, of love for our homeland, and contempt for everything that abuses the dignity of human beings.

The defendants in this case do not in any way regret what we have done to defend our country. We declare ourselves not guilty. We take comfort in having fulfilled our duty to our people and our homeland. Our families understand the depth of the values that guide us. They will be proud of our commitment to humanity in the struggle against terrorism and for the independence of Cuba.

René González, Antonio Guerrero,  
Fernando González,  
Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino

### ‘Never forget, we don’t betray our country’

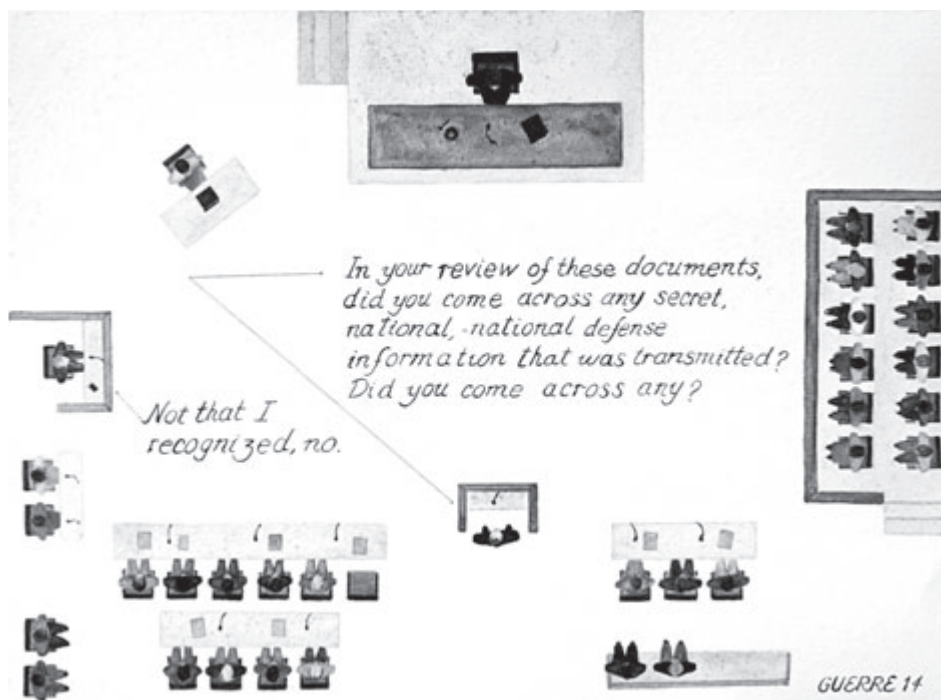
RAMÓN LABAÑINO

Over the course of our long trial — lasting nearly seven months, from November 27, 2000, to June 8, 2001 — the five of us were brought down to the Miami courtroom together. During that time we had many encounters with people who in one way or another expressed support and solidarity, even their heartfelt identification with Cuba and confidence in our commander in chief, Fidel.

These small gestures made us proud. They gave us strength and joy in the midst of what we were going through.

I remember one Cuban in particular, a somewhat older man, who recognized us when our paths crossed and with whom we exchanged a few words from a distance. (He was going in the opposite direction and, like us, his hands and feet were bound.) In essence he extended his support, telling us to stay strong — “fuerte ahí” as we Cubans say — that Fidel wouldn’t abandon us. As he was being hurried along, surrounded by prison guards, he shouted, “And never forget, we don’t betray our country.”

The encounter, especially that phrase, left a deep impression on us, given the circumstances, the



“No Secrets,” by Antonio Guerrero, depicts testimony of prosecution witness James Clapper, then head of National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, during U.S. frame-up trial of Cuban Five. Despite no evidence, three of the Five were convicted of “conspiracy to commit espionage.”

people, and the place — above all because those are the words we carry in our hearts every day of our lives.

As he was moved away, we could only shout our thanks to him from afar.

FCI Ashland, Kentucky  
November 6, 2014

### ‘I have nothing to regret’

GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ

In April 2009 Gerardo Hernández gave documentary filmmaker Saul Landau an interview by phone from the Victorville federal penitentiary in California. The interview was published in full in Spanish and English in the Miami-based online magazine Progreso Semanal/Weekly and in the *Militant*. The excerpt below recounts Hernández’s stance in face of the U.S. government’s efforts to blackmail the five revolutionaries into turning traitor and “cooperating” with the prosecution in exchange for lesser sentences.

SAUL LANDAU : Did you talk to the prosecutors?

GERARDO HERNÁNDEZ : No. Everything was done through our lawyers. When I first talked with the lawyer, he raised the possibility of cooperating with the investigation, cooperating with the government. I don’t know if he was presenting the prosecutor’s idea or not. I told him that if he wanted to continue being my attorney, we should not discuss that question ever again. And he never talked to me about it again. Although later there were the so-called plea agree-

ments that were offered to get us to plead guilty and cooperate. We rejected them all. But we never had direct contact with the prosecution.

LANDAU : Did it ever occur to you to become a traitor to escape the nightmare you’ve described?

HERNÁNDEZ : Look, we’ve been in prison more than ten years. Some people who know about this case say to me, “Cuba must have paid you a ton of money to do this!” I always laugh and say, “If I’d done what I did for money, I wouldn’t be here.” Because when you work for money, you go with the highest bidder. And Cuba could never possibly pay what this country can. If I had accepted their offer, I would have saved myself ten years behind bars without seeing my wife. A lot of people don’t understand this — they’ve been brought up to think money is everything in life.

No, betraying never crossed my mind. It’s so obvious that it’s difficult for me to explain. Not only would it mean betraying myself as a person, as a revolutionary, but betraying an entire country, including my family. It would mean betraying all the Cubans who in the course of a hundred some years of revolution, since the first independence war in 1868, have given their lives so Cuba could be free, independent, and sovereign.

From the very start I had no doubt. What I was doing was not wrong. I’m sorry I had to break some laws, but it was absolutely necessary for a greater good. I have nothing to regret.

## Full-color supplement promotes book that portrays 16-year struggle

The *Militant* has published two special four-page full-color supplements in English and Spanish with sections of the new Pathfinder book *Absolved by Solidarity: 16 Watercolors for 16 Years of Unjust Imprisonment of the Cuban Five*. They include a series of new paintings

by Antonio Guerrero. As Mary-Alice Waters, the book’s editor, points out, “Publication of this powerful portrait of sixteen years of struggle could not be more timely. In its pages you will find not a backward glance at the ‘pain and abuses of prison.’ You will find the dignity, strength, and humanity of the Cuban Revolution and the five unbowed soldiers who have become the face of that revolution the world over.”

The supplements are available for 50 cents each. Orders of 10 or more for 35 cents apiece. You can order a bundle and subscription blanks for the *Militant* at themilitant@mac.com, writing us at 306 W. 37th St, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018 or by calling (212) 244-4899.



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16 watercolors for 16 years of unjust imprisonment of the Cuban Five

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16 acuarelas por 16 años de injusta prisión de los Cinco Cubanos

**pathfinderpress.com**



# Communist Int'l appeals to IWW in 1920: 'Join us!'

Below is an excerpt from the second volume of *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite! Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress, 1920*. The two volumes are part of the series *The Communist International in Lenin's Time*, and contain the reports and discussions of the congress held in Moscow in July-August 1920. This selection is from "Appeal to the IWW," which appears in one of the appendices. Drafted by Gregory Zinoviev, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, the letter presents the achievements of the Russian Revolution and calls for the Industrial Workers of the World, a revolutionary union movement in the U.S., to rally to the banner of communism. It was published in the IWW paper *Solidarity* in August 1920. Copyright © 1991 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Comrades and fellow workers:

The Executive Committee of the Communist International, in session at Moscow, the heart of the Russian revolution, greets the revolutionary American proletariat in the person of the Industrial Workers of the World.

Capitalism, ruined by the World War, unable any longer to contain within itself the tremendous forces it has created, is breaking down.



Industrial Workers of the World demonstration, New York, 1914. "We address this letter to you in recognition of your long and heroic services in the class war, of which you have always borne the brunt," stated the 1920 "Appeal to IWW" by Communist International.

The hour of the working class has struck. The social revolution has begun, and here, on the Russian plain, the first vanguard battle is being fought.

History does not ask whether we want revolution or not, whether the workers are ready or not. Here is the opportunity. Take it and the world will belong to the workers; leave it — there may not be another for generations.

Now is no time to talk of "building the new society within the shell of the old." *The old society is cracking its shell. The workers must establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, which alone can build the new society.*

An article in *One Big Union Monthly*, your official organ, asks, "Why should we follow the Bolsheviks?" According to the writer, all that the Bolshevik revolution in Russia has done is "to give the Russian people the vote."

This is, of course, untrue. The Bolshevik revolution has taken the factories, mills, mines, land, and financial institutions out of the hands of the capitalists, and transferred them to the *whole working class*.

We understand, and share with you, your disgust for the principles and tactics of the Yellow Socialist politicians, who all over the world have discredited the very name of socialism. Our aim is the same as yours — a commonwealth without state, without government, without classes, in which the

workers shall administer the means of production and distribution for the common benefit of all.

We address this letter to you, fellow workers of the IWW, in recognition of your long and heroic services in the class war, of which you have always borne the brunt in your own country, so that you may clearly understand our communist principles and program.

We appeal to you, as revolutionists, to rally to the Communist International, born in the dawn of the world social revolution.

We call you to take the place to which your courage and revolutionary experience entitles you, in the front ranks of the proletarian Red army fighting under the banner of communism.

### Communism and the IWW

The American capitalist class is revealing its true colors. The constantly rising cost of living, the growing unemployment, the savage repression of all efforts of the workers to better their condition, the deportation and imprisonment of "Bolsheviks," the series of antistrike laws, "criminal syndicalist" laws, laws "against red flags," and laws against propaganda advocating the "forcible overthrow of government and the unlawful destruction of property" — all these measures can have but one meaning for every intelligent worker.

Industrial slavery is as old as capital-

ism, and other forms of slavery existed before it. *But now the capitalists of the world — the American capitalists as well as those of France, Italy, England, Germany, and so on — are planning to reduce the workers once and for all to absolute and hopeless serfdom.*

Either this, or the dictatorship of the working class — there is no other alternative. And the workers must choose now.

Capitalism is making desperate efforts to reconstruct its shattered world. The workers must forcibly take state power and reconstruct society in their own interests.

### The coming slave state . . .

Before the American Civil War, the Negro slaves of the South were bound to the land. The industrial capitalists of the North, who needed a floating population to operate their factories, declared slavery to be an outrage and abolished it by force. Now the industrial capitalists are attempting to bind the workers to the factories.

In every country during the World War, it was practically forbidden for the workers to strike, or, in general, to quit their jobs. You will remember the "work or fight" laws in your own country.

And now that the war is over, what has happened? The cost of living has gone up and up, while the capitalists have actually tried to reduce wages. And when the workers, faced by starvation, are forced to strike, the whole power of the state is mobilized to drive them back to the machines. When the railway shopmen walked out, the U.S. marshal of California threatened to bring in federal troops to force them to work. When the railroad brotherhoods demanded higher wages or the nationalization of the railways, the president of the United States menaced them with the full armed power of the government. When the United Mine Workers laid down their tools, thousands of soldiers occupied the mines, and the federal court issued the most sweeping injunction in history, forbidding the union leaders from sending out the strike order or in any way assisting in conducting the strike and forcibly preventing the payment of strike benefits.

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8

The Militant February 2, 2015



# Fight for workers control on the job!

“No worker has to die!” Glova Scott, Socialist Workers Party candidate for City Council in Washington, D.C., told transit workers Jan. 18. “The workers themselves have to be in charge of all health and safety procedures. We need to build fighting unions to organize this.” Six days earlier Carol Glover was killed when a city Metro subway train was stranded and engulfed with smoke for more than an hour. More than 80 other passengers were injured.

Rail bosses are pushing to impose the one-person “crew” — with only an engineer on the train — as part of contract negotiations on freight lines across North America. Already working people are paying a growing price in life and limb for the rail bosses’ greed. Trains have grown longer — some now exceed two miles. And the amount of highly volatile fracked crude oil being transported daily has skyrocketed. The bosses press rail workers to run longer trains and work on smaller crews with less rest.

The bosses disregard for safety means more disasters like the 2013 wreck of an oil train in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, that killed 47 people. These aren’t “accidents” — they are inevitable as long as the bosses are allowed the final say over working conditions.

Recent passenger train derailments have had

deadly consequences. In 2013 alone, six were killed and nearly 200 injured in a derailment south of Paris, 79 were killed in Spain, five in Mexico, and four in a December derailment in the Bronx, N.Y. Amtrak bosses in Washington, D.C., recently tried to eliminate an entire shift in the yard there, making all remaining jobs 12 hours long.

Rail workers are fighting back against the erosion of working conditions and carriers’ demands for crew reductions. Workers on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe, backed by family members and many who live along the tracks, overwhelmingly defeated the railroad’s demand for one-man trains last September.

The rail unions should demand reduction of train length to 50 cars; limit the working day to eight hours, with adequate rest; return the caboose to every train and double the crew size to four; and 100 percent union control over working conditions.

In their relentless efforts to boost profit rates, the owners of the railroads, factories, mines and mills are targeting the living standards, working conditions and safety of all workers. In response, workers’ resistance is growing. Fights like the battle against the one-man “crew” in rail are part of the broader fight for workers control of conditions on the job, enforced by union power.

# French gov’t uses killings to attack free speech

Continued from front page

nated five cartoonists and eight others Jan. 7 at the magazine’s office, saying they acted on behalf of al-Qaeda in Yemen seeking revenge for the honor of the Muslim Prophet Muhammed. The weekly magazine had published numerous vulgar caricatures of Muhammed, along with scatological cartoons ridiculing Jesus, the Virgin Mary, the Pope and many French politicians.

Amedy Coulibaly, who said he acted on behalf of Islamic State, entered the Hyper Cacher kosher market in a Jewish district two days later and killed four shoppers and took several others hostage. He told the media he wanted to get “some Jews.”

French authorities stormed the assailants later that day, killing them and freeing the hostages who remained alive.

Using laws that make “hate speech” a crime, the government arrested comedian Dieudonné M’bala M’bala Jan. 14 for saying on a Facebook post, “I’m feeling like Charlie Coulibaly,” combining the slogan of the protests against the *Charlie Hebdo* murders — “I am Charlie” — with the name of the man who attacked the Jewish shoppers.

Dieudonné already faces charges of condoning terrorism for making a video mocking the decapitation of U.S. journalist James Foley by Islamic State forces in Syria last August. He could be jailed for seven years.

Some of those arrested have already been sentenced under “fast track” legislation passed in November. A 22-year-old man was jailed for a year Jan. 13 for posting a video mocking one of the police officers killed by the Islamists. A drunk driver was sentenced to four years in prison for threatening the cop who arrested him.

France “is at war with terrorism, jihadism and radical Islamism,” Prime Minister Manuel Valls told the French National Assembly Jan. 13.

## History of French rulers’ Jew-hatred

In response to a Jan. 11 call by visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu urging French Jews to move to Israel, Valls said, “France without Jews is not France.”

The fact is the capitalist rulers in France have a long history of Jew-hatred.

Until the French Revolution of 1789, Jews suffered severe legal restrictions. In Colmar in Alsace, a special tax was levied on all Jews and cattle. Jews were then “emancipated,” but told at the time they had to give up acting as Jews and become “assimilated” as French.

In 1894 French army captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jew, was convicted amidst anti-Semitic mobilizations on

frame-up treason charges of giving military secrets to the German government. The anti-Semitic newspaper *La Libre Parole* and many in the French government portrayed all French Jews as disloyal. After a yearslong battle, Dreyfus was pardoned in 1899 and his conviction overturned seven years later. But the French army did not admit his innocence until 1995.

After Germany occupied northern France at the outset of World War II, a pro-Nazi government, with its capital in Vichy, took power in the rest of the country. The Vichy regime forced Jews to wear the Star of David in public and rounded up and deported tens of thousands to Nazi death camps, where some 75,000 were exterminated in the Holocaust.

After the 1967 Six-Day War between Israel and neighboring Arab countries, French President Charles de Gaulle denounced Jews as “an elite people, sure of themselves and domineering” and attacked “Jewish domination” of the media.

In the wake of the killings at *Charlie Hebdo* and of Jews in the kosher grocery, the rulers in France and Germany banned demonstrations called by anti-immigrant groups. Paris police banned a rally with the theme “Islamists out of France” called by Secular Riposte and Republican Resistance. In Dresden, Germany, police banned all public marches for 24 hours Jan. 18, stopping plans by a group calling itself Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West for a rally the next day.

## Obama does not attend Paris rally

Obama decided not to attend the Jan. 11 pro-France march in Paris. A few days later he said he might have made a mistake. But his decision was not a misstep. It was an expression of foreign policy representing the interests of the majority of the U.S. propertied rulers.

The White House felt Obama’s participation would have lent credence to the idea that the imperialist powers face a new challenge on the level of the Sept. 11, 2001, assaults on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Rather than threatening an all-out war on terrorism, as Valls did in France, or military action, as former President George W. Bush did in Iraq, Washington today prefers using drones, bombings, cyber-war, and, when necessary, special forces to weaken and isolate Islamic State and al-Qaeda.

Obama, joined by British Prime Minister David Cameron, told a Jan. 16 White House press conference that the U.S. would “help France seek the justice that is needed ... to defeat these terrorist networks.” But he cautioned Europe’s rulers not to “respond with a hammer and law enforcement and military approaches to these problems.”

# Wages stagnate

Continued from front page

same.

This cycle led to the 2008 economic crisis and stagnation since. The bosses have no answer, other than a relentless, grinding assault on workers’ wages, working conditions, job safety and social protections.

Government statistics point to an uptick in jobs today. According to the Labor Department the unemployment rate for December declined 0.2 percent to 5.6 percent.

At the same time average hourly wages of production and nonsupervisory workers dropped 6 cents to \$20.68, with increasing numbers of workers making less. Over the past year hourly earnings rose 1.7 percent — more than offset by the rising cost of food, rent, health care and other necessities.

This hiring uptick has meant improved conditions for many workers thrown out of jobs over the last six years. It has helped boost the confidence of working people and lay the basis for the current step-up in working-class resistance today. Walmart, fast-food and airport contract workers are marching and organizing strikes, demanding \$15 an hour, full-time work and a union.

While some hiring has picked up, it in no way has ended the crisis of joblessness, for which the capitalist rulers have no solution.

The Jan. 9 *Wall Street Journal* says 2014 was the “best year of [U.S.] job growth in 15 years.” But this gives a false picture of what workers really face.

The government defines the current 5.6 percent official unemployment rate as “full employment.” This includes 8.7 million workers without a job, nearly one-third of them for more than six months, as well as 6.8 million part-time workers — counted as “employed” but unable to get full-time work. Millions more too discouraged to look for work are not even counted by government statisticians. In December, the Labor Department reported that 252,000 jobs were created, but even more workers — 273,000 — were dropped from the workforce count. The U.S. workforce is shrinking. The proportion of men between the ages of 25 and 54 who are not working has more than tripled to 16 percent since the late 1960s. The number of women not working has gone down from 74 percent participating in the workforce in 1999 to 69 percent today.

Of the jobs created, nearly 40 percent of them are in retail trade, leisure and hospitality industries, temporary employment and home health care services, all of which pay low wages.

It took more than five years from the end of the 2008-2009 recession for the number of jobs to equal prerecession numbers. But this ignores the population increase of 15 million over the past seven years — 8 million of whom are of working age.

The actual percentage of the population with a job — a more objective way of examining employment conditions — dropped from 63.3 percent in January 2007 to below 59 percent by September 2009, and since then it has hovered around this figure. In December, it was 59.2, unchanged over the past three months.

Over the past decade the bosses have driven the average hourly pay of manufacturing workers down, the National Employment Law Project reported in November. Workers have been forced to accept widening gaps in pay by two-tier wage schemes and increasing use of temporary workers.

Workers with jobs in industry were among the better paid workers until the early 2000s. By 2013 production jobs paid almost a dollar an hour less than the average workers employed in private sector jobs receive.

## Corrections

In the article “Terror Attacks in France Are Blow to Working Class” in the Jan. 26 issue, the *Militant* incorrectly reported that Amedy Coulibaly made a video of himself during the siege of the kosher market in Paris. He made the video before the siege.

In the same article the *Militant* said that “French authorities in 2011 banned women from wearing the Muslim veil in public.” The law, passed in 2010 and implemented in 2011, banned women from leaving home with their face fully covered.